NONVIOLENCE AND
YOUTH WORK PRACTICE
IN AUSTRALIA

Graeme Robert Stuart
BMus, BSocSci (Welfare Studies), MLitt (Peace Studies)

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2003
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Signed: Graeme Stuart
Dedication

For Bill Moyer (1933-2002), Quaker and nonviolence activist, trainer, writer and theorist who supported and inspired many peace, civil rights, social justice, and environmental activists. My understanding of, and commitment to, nonviolence were deepened through my contact with him.

Acknowledgements

I greatly appreciate the assistance of many people during this research. Over 100 youth workers and young people gave their time and shared their experiences, and I am very grateful for their contribution, and value their input. Numerous other people, including youth workers, social workers, Quakers and nonviolence activists, provided welcomed insights and feedback. Social work staff at the university provided guidance, boosted my confidence, and shared their knowledge and experience. Thank you.

Friends and family were supportive and encouraging, and ensured that I maintained a life outside of study. Particular thanks to Cathy, Mum, Dad, Wendy, George and Megan for assistance with proofreading and commenting on draft chapters.

Members of the reference group played a major role in the research by providing feedback, ensuring the research was well grounded in practice, and maintaining my enthusiasm. I looked forward to our meetings and enjoyed our discussion. Many thanks.

Mel Gray was a wonderful supervisor. She helped me with broad theoretical concepts, pushed me to go in new directions, and focused on the fine detail by being a thorough proofreader. Her optimism, cheerfulness and boundless energy were an inspiration. I am extremely grateful for her input and support.

Jasmine, who was born in December 2000, was actually a distraction but made life so much more enjoyable. Finally, without Cathy’s love and support, I would not have contemplated such a venture. She provided valuable feedback and advice, made sure I did not become totally absorbed in research, and continues to be the love of my life.
Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES.................................................................................................xiii
LIST OF TABLES..................................................................................................xiv
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................... xv
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ............................................................xvii

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY ..................1

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ...........................................................................3
THE RESEARCH..................................................................................................4
THE RESEARCHER ............................................................................................5
THESIS STRUCTURE..........................................................................................6

CHAPTER 2: YOUTH WORK IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT.................9
THE BRITISH YOUTH SERVICE .......................................................................12
Voluntary participation ..................................................................................13
Informal education ........................................................................................14
Other characteristics .......................................................................................17

YOUTH CARE ..................................................................................................17
Building relationships ....................................................................................19
Professionalisation of youth care .................................................................20
CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................21

CHAPTER 3: YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRALIA .............................................23
A HISTORY OF YOUTH WORK IN AUSTRALIA .........................................23
THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF YOUTH WORK....31
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH ..............................................36
DEFINING YOUTH WORK ............................................................................40
SOCIAL JUSTICE ...........................................................................................44
PROFESSIONALISATION ............................................................................45
CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................49
FOCUS GROUPS ........................................................................................................ 157
Focus group size and composition ................................................................... 158
Structure of focus groups ................................................................................. 160
Role of the researcher ...................................................................................... 163
Transcription and data analysis ......................................................................... 164
LIMITATIONS OF PHASE 3 .................................................................................. 165
QUALITY CONTROL ............................................................................................ 166

SECTION III: RESEARCH FINDINGS ................................................................. 171

CHAPTER 9: TELEPHONE SURVEY ................................................................. 173
The Participants .................................................................................................. 173
Importance of violence and nonviolence as issues ........................................... 174
Perceived levels of non-violence and inclusiveness ......................................... 175
Current work practice ....................................................................................... 179
Issues for further investigation ......................................................................... 182

CHAPTER 10: THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS ................................................... 189
Violence/non-violence ....................................................................................... 189
Discrimination .................................................................................................... 191
Sexism .................................................................................................................. 191
Racism and homophobia ................................................................................. 194
Managing behaviour ........................................................................................ 195
Non-coercive strategies ..................................................................................... 196
Building relationships ....................................................................................... 196
Understanding group dynamics ....................................................................... 201
Negotiation and mediation .............................................................................. 202
Establishing boundaries and structure ........................................................... 203
Teamwork ........................................................................................................... 205
Prevention ............................................................................................................ 206
Coercive strategies ............................................................................................. 212
Physical restraint ............................................................................................... 212
Exclusion .............................................................................................................. 213
The police ............................................................................................................ 219
APPENDICES.............................................................................................................. 301

1: TELEPHONE SURVEY ..................................................................................... 303
2: TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS ................................................................. 315
3: SURVEY INFORMATION SHEETS AND CONSENT FORM ....................... 321
4: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM FOR
   YOUTH WORKERS ....................................................................................... 327
5 : IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM FOR
   YOUNG PEOPLE .......................................................................................... 331
6 : LETTER TO YOUTH WORKERS SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR IN-DEPTH
   INTERVIEWS ................................................................................................. 335
7 : FOCUS GROUPS INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM ................... 341
8 : RESEARCH REFERENCE GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE ..................... 345
9 : LIST OF NODES (AS AT END OF AXIAL CODING) ...................................... 347
10: DRAFT MODEL OF NONVIOLENT YOUTH WORK PRACTICE ................. 359
11: ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT MANDALA .............................. 361
List of Figures

FIGURE 2 - 1: TRADITIONS OF WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ........................................ 11
FIGURE 2 - 2: THE ROLE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKER ............................. 19
FIGURE 2 - 3: COMPARISON OF BRITISH YOUTH SERVICE AND YOUTH CARE ................. 22
FIGURE 3 - 1: MODELS OF YOUTH WORK ........................................................................ 29
FIGURE 3 - 2: NOTIONS OF YOUTH AND ADULT ............................................................. 37
FIGURE 3 - 3: COMPARISON OF YOUTH CARE, & AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH YOUTH WORK...
............................................................................................................. 50
FIGURE 4 - 1: VIOLENCE TRIANGLE .................................................................................. 61
FIGURE 4 - 2: LEVELS OF DIRECT VIOLENCE ................................................................. 61
FIGURE 4 - 3: MONOLITH AND CONSENT VIEWS OF POWER .......................................... 64
FIGURE 5 - 1: THREE RESEARCH PARADIGMS ............................................................... 87
FIGURE 5 - 2: PHASES AND ACTIVITIES OF INTERVENTION RESEARCH....................... 89
FIGURE 5 - 3: EVIDENCE CONTINUUM ............................................................................. 91
FIGURE 5 - 4: RESEARCH STEPS IN RELATION TO INTERVENTION RESEARCH PHASES..... 92
FIGURE 5 - 5: RESEARCH FLOW CHART .......................................................................... 93
FIGURE 6 - 1: YOUTH WORK LITERATURE SEARCH ..................................................... 111
FIGURE 6 - 2: NONVIOLENCE LITERATURE SEARCH ...................................................... 112
FIGURE 6 - 3: FUNDING PROGRAMS USED FOR THE STRATIFIED SAMPLE .................. 115
FIGURE 7 - 1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS – YOUTH WORKERS ...................... 130
FIGURE 7 - 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS – YOUNG PEOPLE ......................... 131
FIGURE 7 - 3: DECISIONS RE TRANSCRIBING ................................................................. 137
FIGURE 8 - 1: GENDER AND EXPERIENCE OF FOCUS GROUPS MEMBERS .................... 159
FIGURE 8 - 2: FOCUS GROUP TOPICS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS ................................. 162
FIGURE 9 - 1: AGREEMENT THAT SERVICES GENERALLY DEAL WITH VIOLENCE WELL . 175
FIGURE 11 - 1: MODEL OF NONVIOLENT YOUTH WORK PRACTICE .............................. 228
FIGURE 11 - 2: FOUR ROLES OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM ..................................................... 241
FIGURE 11 - 3: SOURCES FOR MODEL OF NONVIOLENT YOUTH WORK PRACTICE ....... 252
List of Tables

TABLE 6 - 1: NUMBER OF SERVICES SELECTED ................................................................. 117
TABLE 6 - 2: RESPONSE RATE ..................................................................................... 118
TABLE 9 - 1: PERCEIVED LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN SERVICES ..................................... 176
TABLE 9 - 2: PERCEIVED LEVELS OF ACCEPTANCE OF MARGINALISED PEOPLE ...... 179
TABLE 9 - 3: WORK PRACTICE IN THE YOUTH SERVICES ........................................... 181
TABLE 9 - 4: LOCATION OF BARRIERS TO HAVING A CULTURE OF NONVIOLENCE .... 182
TABLE 9 - 5: BARRIERS TO HAVING A CULTURE OF NONVIOLENCE ............................ 183
TABLE 9 - 6: FOCUS OF STRATEGIES TO DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF NONVIOLENCE... 185
TABLE 9 - 7: STRATEGIES TO HELP DEVELOP A CULTURE OF NONVIOLENCE .......... 186
Abstract

This study developed a model of youth work practice based on a philosophy of nonviolence. Youth work in Australia is in the process of creating a clear self-consciousness and idea of its role, and a philosophy of nonviolence provides a strong foundation for further development. The study was based on the first three phases of intervention research (problem analysis and project planning, information gathering and synthesis, and design) within a heuristic paradigm. It involved a literature review, a telephone survey of 60 youth workers, in-depth interviews with 20 young people and 15 youth workers, and focus groups with 16 youth workers. Literature on youth work in Australia and Britain, and youth care in Canada and South Africa helped identify key features of youth work. Ten principles of nonviolence were developed based on principled nonviolence literature. The telephone survey provided a broad overview of current practice in New South Wales, and identified issues for further exploration in the interviews. The in-depth interviews with youth workers and young people explored their perceptions of violence and discrimination within their services; ways in which youth workers prevent and respond to disruptive, violent and unsafe behaviour; and ways in which youth work practice can be consistent with a philosophy of nonviolence. Based on the research, a model of nonviolent practice was developed, and then refined following focus groups with youth workers. The model encourages youth workers to be committed to nonviolence in all they do; to develop a reflective work practice; to build professional, caring relationships; to focus on power-with; to be committed to social change; to apply principles of social justice; to ensure there are adequate, appropriate staff and resources; to negotiate clear expectations and boundaries; to create a positive environment; to respond to behaviour nonviolently; and to facilitate informal education.
## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACOSS</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFC</td>
<td>Adolescent and Family Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APT</td>
<td>American Peace Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVP</td>
<td>Alternatives to Violence Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch.</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CETS</td>
<td>Community Employment, Training and Support (industrial award)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSGP</td>
<td>Community Services Grants Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYSS</td>
<td>Community Youth Support Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETYA</td>
<td>Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoCS</td>
<td>Department of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAYP</td>
<td>Education Access - Youth Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ed., eds</td>
<td>Editor(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et al.</td>
<td>Et alii (and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELP</td>
<td>Helping Early Leavers Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>Help Increase the Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHS HY</td>
<td>Innovative Health Service for Homeless Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPET</td>
<td>Job Placement Employment Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health and Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>No date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no.</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p., pp.</td>
<td>Page(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para., paras</td>
<td>Paragraph(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAP</td>
<td>Supported Accommodation Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACS</td>
<td>Social and Community Services (industrial award)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCF</td>
<td>Save the Children Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education (a tertiary vocational education provider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vol., vols</td>
<td>Volume(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>